

Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 NEA-10 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-14 USIA-12 SY-07 IO-13 EB-11 SCA-01 CCO-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USSS-00 RSR-01 /126 W
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R 092304 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1230

INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1622

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING OF NEWSPAPER OWNER: A REAL WHODUNIT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. MORNING PRESS REPORTED MARCH 8 KIDNAPPING OF OWNER OF PERONIST- ORIENTED CRONICA DAILY AND HIS RELEASE FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION BY THE PAPER OF AN EXTREMIST COMMUNIQUE WHICH VOICES SUPPORT FOR FRENTE JUSTICIALISTA CANDIDATE SLATE. HOWEVER, CHARACTER OF KIDNAPPING AS WELL AS OTHER RECENT EVENTS SUPPORT THEORY THAT EXTREMISTS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CRIME. END SUMMARY.

2. MARCH 9 PRESS REPORTED KIDNAPPING YESTERDAY MORNING OF HECTOR R. GARCIA, OWNER OF PERONIST- ORIENTED DAILY CRONICA AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF TELEVISION CHANNEL ELEVEN. VICTIM WAS RELEASED UNHARMED SOME FOURTEEN HOURS LATER AFTER RANSOM DEMAND SATISFIED.

3. RANSOM CONSISTED OF DEMAND THAT AFTERNOON MARCH 8 CRONICA PUBLISH TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE ATTRIBUTED TO TROTSKYITE EJERCITO REVOLUCIONARIO DEL PUEBLO (ERP) IN WHICH EXTREMISTS, WHILE
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STATING ELECTIONS NOT ROAD TO NATIONAL AND SOCIAL LIBERATION, VOICE SUPPORT OF FRENTE JUSTICIALISTA CANDIDATES AND CALL ON PEOPLE TO VOTE EN MASSE FOR PERONISTS. COMMUNIQUE ALSO DECLARES THAT FUERZAS ARMADAS REVOLUCIONARIAS (FAR) AND MONTONEROS EXTREMISTS GROUPS, WITH WHOM ERP HAS FRATERNAL TIES, FORM PART OF BACKBONE OF PERONISM.

4. MARCH 9 PRESS ALSO REPORTS BOMBING LAST NIGHT OF NINO RESTAURANT IN BUENOS AIRES SUBURB OF VICENTE LOPEZ WHICH WAS SCENE OF MEETING LAST NOVEMBER BETWEEN EX- PRESIDENT PERON AND MOST OF COUNTRY' S POLITICAL FIGURES AS WELL AS MORE RECENT GATHERINGS OF PERONIST MOVEMENT. BLAST CAUSED EXTENSIVE MATERIAL DAMAGE TO BUILDING AND CONTENTS: HOWEVER, NO CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED. AUTHORS OF BOMBING NOT IDENTIFIED IN PRESS.

5. COMMENT. ON SURFACE KIDNAPPING AND BOMBING WOULD APPEAR TO BE LAST GASP ATTEMPTS BY EXTREMISTS TO ABORT ELECTIONS; HOWEVER, SIGNS POINT TO OTHER POSSIBLE CULPRITS. WHILE ERP HAS ON OCCASION WORKED JOINTLY WITH THE NOMINALLY- PERONIST FAR AND MONTONEROS, IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES ARE PRESUMABLY SUFFICIENT TO PRECLUDE ANY ENDORSEMENT OF THE FRENTE SLATE BY THE TROTSKYITES. FURTHERMORE, FJL DEPUTY CANDIDATE DIEGO MUNIZ BARRETO HAS ACCUSED PRESIDENT PRESS SECRETARY EDGARDO SAJON OF HEADING UP A GROUP CALLED COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CURRENT SPATE OF ANTI- PERON NEWSPAPER ADS. EMBASSY' S PERONIST CONTACTS CLAIM KIDNAPPING AND COMMUNIQUE WERE LANUSSE- INSPIRED PROVOCATION. PRO- PERONIST DAILY MAYORIA THIS MORNING DIRECTLY ACCUSES SAJON OF AUTHORIZING PROVOCATION. TAKEN TOGETHER THESE EVENTS AND ALLEGATIONS SUGGEST A CONTINUATION OF THE PREVIOUSLY- REPORTED GOA CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT THE FRENTE IN VOTERS' EYES BY PORTRAYING THE PERONISTS AS BEING BACKED BY TERRORISTS AND CONFIRMS THEORY THAT HARD- LINERS IN GOVERNMENT BECOMING MORE DESPERATE IN FACE OF BRIGHT PERONIST PROSPECTS.

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